

President Dana Platin Sunday Morning Speech

PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

This is the National PTA mission statement. At the start of every state president's meeting, our National President, Anna King, chooses someone to read it and to share what it means to them. She does this to remind us of why we do what we do, since it's this mission that drives our work.

New York State's PTA mission differs slightly but remains the same in its message.

PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

It is vitally important that we never lose sight of that. PTA is first, and foremost, an advocacy association. It is at the heart of what we do. With that said, however, we couldn't do this very important work without our members, so our membership drives are essential to our existence. But without our region and local leaders, we could never accomplish all of our goals, and without leadership development and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative to train and equip those leaders, where would we be? PTA is all about children and youth. The many programs and awards that we offer are integral to supporting and encouraging our students, who are the very future of PTA and on whom we depend on to carry on our legacy. And of course, we cannot leave out the nuts and bolts of the business of PTA, our bylaws and procedures and doing all that needs to be done to stay a unit in good standing.

So, basically, PTA isn't all about one thing. It's all of these things and we achieve them by staying true to our PTA values and purposes. It's about collaboration, commitment, accountability, respect, inclusivity, diversity, and integrity, and with all of them in place, we are well respected and highly regarded in our communities and in Albany.

Two years ago, I set several goals for myself, for our Governance Team and for all of our members. With the dark cloud of Covid-19 looming over us, it was evident that we needed embrace the power of positivity, so as to reenergize our volunteers and renew their sense of "Why PTA?".

We needed to restore regular communication and inclusivity. The pandemic forced us to gather and communicate in different ways and to think out of the box. And now, here we are, all experts in the art of the zoom and realizing that a hybrid mix of in-person and virtual meetings have given many more members the chance to participate in ways that they hadn't been able to before.

On Day 1 of my presidency, I made a pledge to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives and programs at the unit, council, region, and state board levels. Recognizing that all members don't look like me, our focus shifted to a new mindset. In finding ways to broaden our reach, we sought to provide diverse leadership training and opportunities to support ALL children, no matter their race, ethnicity, zip code, income, gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status. This became our true objective, and our ongoing commitment is strong. We are a work in progress, always learning and growing, but our new understanding has us looking through new and differing lenses.

On a personal note, serving as your president has been a humbling and life-changing experience. It has been a journey of self-awareness and reflection, and growth as both as a leader and as a person, as well as a whirlwind of the most extraordinary opportunities and adventures.

I can't believe how quickly my term as president flew by and I'm not quite ready to let it go. I have loved every minute and I feel blessed. I cannot thank you all enough for your support and guidance, and for standing beside me, as together, our passion and devotion to the mission of PTA, shined a light on every child with one voice.

One last thing to leave you with comes from a beautiful gift that I received from a special friend.

Advice from a Lighthouse

Stand tall

Light the way for others

Enjoy the view

Take life one step at a time

Stand firm in your beliefs

Be a beacon of hope

Stay calm through the storm

Let your light shine.

I thank you for shining your light with me and for letting me shine mine. It has been my greatest honor.